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Monsoon leaves trail of destruction in Kerala, M'rashtra

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RBI balance sheet swells 8.2% to ₹76.25L cr

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SPORTS

RCB storm into IPL 2025 final

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PHOTO: PTI

US court blocks Trump's trade tariffs

WASHINGTON, 29 MAY

A federal court on Wednesday blocked US President Donald Trump from imposing sweeping tariffs on imports under an emergency-powers law, swiftly throwing into doubt Trump's signature set of economic policies that have rattled global financial markets, frustrated trade partners and raised broader fears about inflation intensifying and the economy slumping. The ruling from a three-judge panel at the New York-based US Court of International Trade came after several lawsuits argued that Trump exceeded his authority and subjected trade policy to his whims. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: PTI

After dissing bill, Musk exits Trump admin

WASHINGTON, 29 MAY

Elon Musk abruptly left his government role as a top advisor to US President Donald Trump after spearheading efforts to reduce and overhaul the federal bureaucracy. His departure from the Department of Government Efficiency, (DOGE), announced on Wednesday evening, marks the end of a turbulent chapter that included thousands of layoffs, the evisceration of government agencies and reams of litigation. His decision however, comes shortly after he said he was "disappointed" by Trump's "big beautiful bill", terming it a "massive spending bill" that is either big or beautiful, but not both. *—PTI*

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IAF Chief flags delays in defence projects

He says 'Make In India' not enough and contracts are signed despite knowing it won't be delivered

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh and others during the CII Annual General Meeting & Business Summit 2025 in New Delhi on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh on Thursday raised serious concerns over persistent delays in defence acquisition projects, urging for realistic planning, transparency, and faster execution to meet the Indian Air Force's (IAF) growing operational needs.

Speaking at an official event, the Air Chief questioned the inability to meet procurement timelines. "Every project I can think of has been delayed. We often sign contracts knowing the timelines are unachievable. We must be realistic and transparent from the beginning," he said.

Singh stressed the need for indigenous capability and capacity under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. "We can't just produce in India; we must design and develop here too. To achieve scale, we need strong trust and communication between the forces and industry," he noted.

Highlighting the urgency of operational readiness, he added, "What we need today is required today. Fast-track Make-in-India programmes must complement long-term development."

> This is not Singh's first critique of the defence production ecosystem. Last year, he remarked that India had fallen behind China in defence technology.

This is not Singh's first critique of the defence production ecosystem. Last year, he remarked that India had fallen behind China in defence technology and production rates. In February, a leaked comment during a cockpit interaction at HAL saw him expressing doubts over the state-run manufacturer's efficiency, stating, "I was promised 11 Tejas Mk1As by February. Not a single one is ready. HAL is just not in mission mode." *—PTI*

PoK people will return to India voluntarily, says Rajnath

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that the people of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) are part of India's "own family" and expressed confidence that they will one day return to the Indian mainstream, guided by their "inner voice". Speaking at the CII Business Summit, Singh said India has "redesigned and redefined" its approach to terrorism and relations with Pakistan. "Dialogue with Islamabad will only be on terrorism and PoK," he stated firmly. He described the unification of PoK with India as dependent on the country's cultural, social, and economic progress. "India believes in connecting hearts. The day is not far when PoK will return and say, 'I am India, I have returned,'" Singh said. *—PTI*

Rajasthan govt employee arrested for spying for ISI

Jaipur/New Delhi/Mumbai 29 May

A Rajasthan government employee was detained in Jaisalmer on suspicion of espionage for Pakistan. Sources said he worked as an assistant to former Congress minister Shale Mohammad. Mohammed was a minister under the Ashok Gelhot government. Shakur Khan, who works in the district employment office, was found to have phone numbers associated with Pakistan stored on his device, an official said. He was in touch with people in Pakistan and shared security related updates from Jaisalmer, it is alleged. *—PTI*

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M'luru tension: Rao to quit?

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Dinesh Gundu Rao has reportedly offered to step down as the Dakshina Kannada district in-charge minister, following the recent wave of communal tensions in the area.

Sources said that he met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at his official residence in Kaveri on Thursday and requested to be relieved of his position.

Earlier in the day, he said anti-national forces are targeting Muslims and alleged that attempts are made to create a "terrorised" atmosphere in Dakshina Kannada, where a 32-year-old man was killed. He described the situation as "worrying". The Health Minister also hit out at the BJP, citing comments against senior officials from the Muslim community, and called the mindset "extremists or terrorists".

Dinesh Gundu Rao *PHOTO: PTI*

Speaking to reporters after meeting Home Minister G Parameshwara, he said that although one person had died, the plan reportedly was to kill more people.

Meanwhile, the State government transferred the Mangaluru City Police Commissioner Anupam Agrawal and appointed Sudheer Kumar Reddy, currently the Deputy Inspector General of Police in the Intelligence Department, in his place. The government also transferred the Dakshina Kannada district Superintendent of Police Yatish N Udupi. SP Arun K will replace him. —Agencies

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FLOODING WOES

Buildings obstructing water flow to be demolished in B'luru

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said on Thursday that he has directed Bengaluru civic authorities to demolish buildings obstructing the natural flow of rainwater and contributing to flooding, invoking the Disaster Management Act.

Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru development portfolio, visited areas in the City that were flooded during the recent rains.

He inspected the stormwater drains that contributed to flooding near Manyata Tech Park.

"This is a very important junction. The problem started here and has since spread to other areas," Shivakumar said.

He added that some individuals obstructing the natural flow of water have obtained stay orders from the court and some civic officials were not cooperating.

"Therefore, I have instructed officials to remove the buildings causing the problem under the Disaster Management Act," he said.

Shivakumar clarified that the government does not intend to damage anyone's property or act unjustly.

"The point here is that water should flow smoothly. That's why I visited and inspected the area myself. It is important to find a permanent solution," he said.

Stressing that the City's image should not suffer due to flooding, Shivakumar appealed to landowners to cooperate.

"If a mistake has occurred due to technical reasons, we will provide compensation. We need a permanent solution to this issue. Everyone has agreed, and we will continue our work," he said.

Chief commissioner of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, M Maheshwar Rao, has been given full authority to remove encroachments. *—PTI*

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar inspected the stormwater drains near Manyata Tech Park *PHOTO: SALAR*

K'TAKA HC BINS GOVT ORDER WITHDRAWING 43 CRIMINAL CASES

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday struck down a state government order that had instructed public prosecutors to withdraw 43 criminal cases, including those related to the 2022 Hubballi riots.

The court's verdict came in a public interest litigation filed by advocate Girish Bharadwaj, challenging the order.

A bench allowed the PIL, declaring the government's directive invalid from the beginning.

The court said that legal consequences will follow.

Advocate Venkatesh Dalwai, representing the petitioner, argued that the state government had exceeded its authority by directing prosecutors to file applications under Section 321 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to withdraw cases.

He emphasized that the decision to withdraw prosecutions lay solely with the public prosecutor, who must act independently and not at the behest of the executive.

The Law Department and the Prosecution and Government Litigation Department had advised against withdrawing the 43 cases. The Home Department instead issued the withdrawal order on 15 October, 2024. The cases selected for withdrawal involved serious offences including rioting, attempted murder, assault on police personnel and destruction of public property. *—PTI*

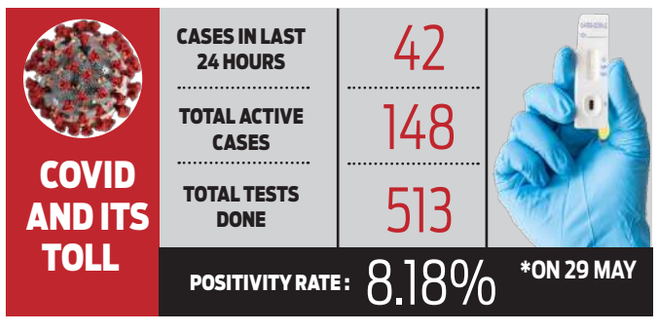
Covid claims life in Belagavi; 2nd fatality in Karnataka this month

BELAGAVI, 29 MAY

A 70-year-old man from Benakanahalli village in Belagavi succumbed to Covid-19 late on Wednesday night at the Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences (BIMS), marking the district's first Covid-related death and the second in Karnataka this month.

The elderly patient, who was admitted on Tuesday for age-related ailments, tested positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday. He was immediately shifted to the hospital's Covid ward, where he died a few hours later. His last rites were performed in accordance with Covid protocols.

Belagavi District Health Officer Dr Girish Gadadi confirmed the death and said isolated 5-bed Covid wards equipped with oxygen and medicines have been established in all government hospitals. "The pregnant woman who also tested positive is recovering at BIMS, and no other cases have been reported in the district so far," he added. Harsh Gupta, Principal Secretary, Karnataka's Health and Family Welfare Department, also confirmed the death. Earlier, on 17 May, an 84-year-old man with comorbidities died at a private hospital in Whitefield, Bengaluru. *—Salar News*



WADIYARS VS GOVT

B'lore Palace: SC suspends order on TDR

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

The Supreme Court on Thursday suspended the previous orders for handing over of transferable development rights (TDR) certificates worth over Rs 3,400 crore to Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Wadiyar and other legal heirs of the Mysuru royal family for acquisition of over 15 acres of land of Bangalore Palace ground for widening of roads.

A bench said that the TDR certificates would remain with the Registry and they would not be utilised or any third party right created in case of their release.

The court will hear the review petition filed by the state government against the release of TDR certificates in July, while the main civil appeal will be heard by a three judge bench on 18 August. The court passed the order after hearing the Karnataka government's arguments seeking modification of direction issued in contempt proceedings. Senior advocates AK Ganguli and Gopal Sankaranarayanan, representing the Mysuru royal family said that the state government arguments have been considered and rejected several times.

The court said that the interim arrangement was without prejudice to the rights of both parties. On 29 January, 2025, the Karnataka government notified the Bangalore Palace (Utilization and Regulation of Land) Ordinance 2025 and reserved the right to not acquire portions of the disputed palace land after the apex court's order on issuance of TDR. The government also filed a separate application seeking consideration of a civil appeal challenging the constitutional validity of the Bangalore Palace Act. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Elderly accident victim dies alone; cops look for family

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

City police are appealing for public assistance in tracing the family of a 60-year-old man, identified only as Muniyappa, who died alone at a shelter for the destitute days after a road accident. On 15 May, he was hit by a private bus near Kanti Sweets, Kempegowda Circle, around 8.50pm. Believed to have sustained minor injuries, he walked away and did not report the incident. The next day, shopkeepers found him unresponsive and admitted him to Victoria Hospital. After treatment, he was discharged on 25 May but was unable to recall personal details. He was moved to the Friends of Sick Association shelter on Bannerghatta Road, where he died in his sleep on 28 May. Anyone with information should contact Upparpet Police Station or dial 112. *—Salar News*

CCB busts illegal arms racket, arrests rowdy

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) arrested a rowdy-sheeter and his supplier on Thursday for attempting to sell country-made firearms and ammunition in the city. Acting on a tip-off, CCB officers detained the rowdy near Swatantranagar Main Road in DJ Halli, under KG Halli police limits. He was found in possession of a country-made gun, a pistol, and two live bullets. The accused had reportedly procured the weapons from outside Karnataka at a low cost, intending to resell them in Bengaluru. A case under the Arms Act has been registered. During questioning, the suspect revealed he sourced the firearms from a man in Punjab. Following this lead, CCB police tracked down the supplier in Tej Bahadur Nagar, Punjab, who also confessed to supplying the weapons.*—Salar News*

Parents file FIR as medico drowns in Cauvery

MYSURU, 29 MAY

Parents of Nandan Gowda, 21, who allegedly drowned in the Cauvery near Bharachukki waterfalls of Shivanasamudra on Tuesday, have filed a complaint against six youths. The body of Gowda, a student of Dayanand Sagar Medical College of Bengaluru, was found on Wednesday. Gowda's father Shivashankar has named Tanmay and Pavan from Shivamogga; Tushar, Praful and Rajath from Bengaluru; and Chathur from Kodagu in his complaint. He alleged that the youths forcibly took his son to Shivanasamudra. They removed his clothes and forced him to swim in the river as part of ragging, leading to his death, he said.
—Salar News

Kolar bank chief alleges murder plot by ex-speaker

KOLAR, 29 MAY

Byalahalli Govinda Gowda, former president of the Kolar-Chikkaballapur District Central Co-operative Bank, has alleged that ex-speaker KR Ramesh Kumar is plotting to kill him. After winning the DCC Bank Director election in Kolar, Gowda—once a close supporter of Ramesh Kumar—claimed the latter would be solely responsible if any harm came to him. Their fallout began during the last Assembly elections, where Ramesh Kumar hinted a Vokkaliga leader had contributed to his defeat. Since then, tensions have escalated, with Ramesh Kumar and his supporters, including MLC Anil Kumar, levelling serious corruption charges against Gowda. Despite political opposition, including from two MLAs and one MLC, Govinda Gowda secured victory and retaliated with his explosive accusations.
—Salar News

Anti-Communal Force to begin work in 3 districts

The force will monitor social media for hate speech

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said the "Anti-Communal Force" that was announced earlier to deal with communal incidents will soon start operating in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Shivamogga districts.

"Studying how to structure it, who will head it and what powers should be given – working out all those things took time. We have finally issued a Government Order to set up the Anti-Communal Force immediately. The DGP will take the necessary measures," Parameshwara said.

The home minister said, "We had planned to disband the Anti-Naxal Force. Half of that has been converted into the Anti-Communal Force. All necessary powers and amenities required will be provided to the force, which will begin operation initially in three districts – Shivamogga, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada."

Police personnel inspect the area after a youth was killed after a gang attacked him with swords in Bantwal *PHOTO: PTI*

Noting that the three districts and other places with communal activities will be considered as sensitive, Parameshwara said "merciless action" will be taken against perpetrators. "We will not rest until we suppress such communal activities and murders," he added.

It said out of the total 656 posts of various grades currently existing in the Anti-Naxal Force in the state, 248 will be shifted to the new force. The force will have a Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP), a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP-Civil) and an Assistant Commandant, four Police Inspectors and 16 Police Sub-Inspectors.

The order said the force will have three companies, which will be stationed in Udupi, Shivamogga and Dakshina Kannada districts.

The force will have an intelligence unit to monitor the mainstream and the social media for intelligence on hate speech, inflammatory incidents and communal incidents and a warning system for surveillance of potential communal violence.

It will also undertake measures to identify and monitor radicalisation and take steps to deploy Special Task Force Officers or personnel by the Zonal IGPs in cases of communal violence. *—PTI*

Muslims decry inaction, quit Cong

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

In a dramatic show of dissent, hundreds of Muslim Congress workers and leaders in Dakshina Kannada district resigned en masse on Thursday, accusing the State government and police of failing to curb communal violence in the region.

The resignations were announced during an emotionally charged emergency meeting at Shaadi Mahal auditorium in Bolar, Mangaluru. Prominent figures among those stepping down were KPCC General Secretary MS Mohammed, Minority Cell district president Shahul Hameed and Dakshina Kannada District Congress Committee vice-president and former Mangaluru mayor K Ashraf.

The immediate trigger was the brutal killing of Abdul Rahman, 32, secretary of Kolattamajalu Jumma Masjid, on Tuesday afternoon along with his 29-year-old colleague Kalandar Shafi. The attack came just weeks after the murder of right-wing activist Suhas Shetty, fuelling fears of retaliatory violence spiralling out of control.

> **There should be communal harmony in that region. There should not be any hatred among Hindus and Muslims. We have to bring harmony there, for which we had a discussion**
>
> -Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

"Mangaluru shuts down by 7pm out of fear. Minority students are too afraid to come to the city," said Hameed.

"What's the point of holding positions (in the ruling party) when the government fails to protect our community?" asked another leader.

4 held in Bantwal murder

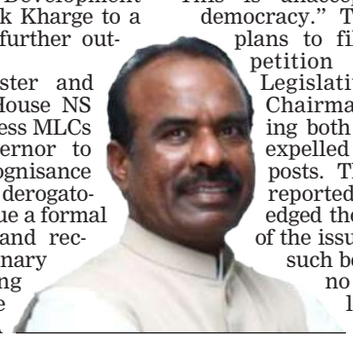
Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said four people have been arrested in connection with the murder of a 32-year-old muslim man in Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district.

"We will take merciless action irrespective of whoever the culprits are. We will not rest unless we suppress such communal activities and murders," he said. *— Salar News with Agencies*

Congress MLCs move Guv against BJP's Ravikumar

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Ravikumar faced backlash for questioning whether Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fouzia Taranum was an IAS officer or "someone from Pakistan", a comment widely condemned as communal. Meanwhile, Narayanswamy allegedly likened Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge to a dog, triggering further outrage.



Led by Minister and Leader of the House NS Boseraju, Congress MLCs urged the Governor to take suo motu cognisance of Ravikumar's derogatory comment, issue a formal condemnation, and recommend disciplinary action, including possible censure or suspension. A separate petition called for Narayanswamy to resign, citing "unparliamentary conduct".

Speaking to reporters, Boseraju said the BJP leaders' remarks were disgraceful and unbefitting of their positions. He criticised the BJP's silence, stating, "No BJP leader has condemned these statements. This is unacceptable in a democracy." The Congress plans to file a similar petition with the Legislative Council Chairman, demanding both members be expelled from their posts. The Governor reportedly acknowledged the seriousness of the issue and agreed such behaviour had no place in public life. *—PTI*

BACK TO SCHOOL

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah greets students at a government school in Bengaluru's Adugodi on the first day of the academic year *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

Rahul hails social security ordinance for gig workers

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday hailed as historic the Karnataka government's move to promulgate an ordinance aimed at providing social security to platform-based gig workers, stressing that this was the party's vision it would take to every state. The ordinance, promulgated on Tuesday, also proposes the establishment of a welfare board and creation of a dedicated welfare fund for the gig workers. "'Not rating, we need rights; we are humans, not slaves." These powerful words from gig workers stayed with me during the Bharat Jodo Yatra'," Gandhi said.The ordinance, he said, ensures social security, fair contracts, transparency in algorithmic pay and an end to arbitrary blocking. *—PTI*

DKS orders no engineer should be transferred without his nod

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has written to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, requesting that no engineer from the Water Resources Department be transferred without his prior approval. Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar highlighted the shortage of engineers in the department, which he oversees, and stressed the urgent need to retain them.

He explained that engineers often join the Water Resources Department, gain promotions, and are then moved to other departments such as Public Works and Zilla Panchayat. While he did not name those responsible for the transfers, Shivakumar acknowledged that such decisions can be made at senior levels and are sometimes influenced by pressure from local MLAs.

Shivakumar highlighted the shortage of engineers in the department, which he oversees, and stressed the urgent need to retain them *PHOTO: X/DKS*

"I have instructed the Chief Secretary not to transfer any engineer without informing me," he said. Reacting to Shivakumar's statement, BJP state president BY Vijayendra suggested these developments hint at significant political changes in Karnataka. He linked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent visit to senior Congress leader and MLC BK Hariprasad's residence to shifting dynamics within the party, describing the situation as a "prelude to the climax".

The exchanges underline possible tensions within the Congress leadership as Shivakumar seeks greater control over his portfolio. *—PTI*

Visitors barred from going near water bodies

MYSURU, 29 MAY

The Chamarajanagar district administration on Thursday prohibited visitors from venturing close to waterfalls, river banks and other tourist spots close to rivers as a precautionary measure because of the heavy rains in the catchment areas of the rivers Kabini and Cauvery. Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Nag issued the order after a meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority. Tourist access to Gaganachukki, Bharachukki and Hogenakkal waterfalls has been prohibited until further orders, as the rain is raising the water levels in rivers Kabini and Cauvery, as well as the reservoirs, she said. Nag has asked the tourists to avoid going near waterfalls, reservoirs, river banks and flood-prone areas to avoid any untoward incidents, considering the dangerous weather conditions prevailing in the state. *—Salar News*

Relative held for murder of home alone City woman

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Cottonpet police have solved the murder of a 50-year-old woman who was found dead in her home, arresting two men, including her relative, who allegedly killed her to steal valuables and recover losses from a scam.

The victim, Latha, lived on Dargah Road in Cottonpet with her husband Prakash, a wholesale cloth merchant, and their two children. On Monday, Prakash had left early for work with their daughter, while their son was at school, leaving Latha home alone.

The accused, Purandar, 42, a relative of the victim, and his friend Shivappa, 35, both electricians from Bidar, allegedly visited Latha under the guise of a family visit. Police said she welcomed them in and served them lunch.

After the meal, the two men allegedly strangled Latha to death and looted gold jewellery worth several lakhs and Rs 1.5 lakh in cash before fleeing to Bidar.

The victim Latha *PHOTO: SALAR*

The murder came to light when Prakash returned home for lunch and found Latha dead. Her face bore signs of injury, indicating a violent struggle.

CCTV footage from the area helped police identify and track the suspects to Bidar. The duo, who admitted to losses in a fraudulent 'rice pulling' scam, confessed to the murder during interrogation. Both have been charged with murder and theft. *—Salar News*

Robotic surgery transforms gynaecological care

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

A new study, released to mark Women's Health Month this May, highlights the growing impact of robotic-assisted surgery (RAS) in transforming gynaecological care across India. Conducted across five major tertiary hospitals—Apollo Health City (Hyderabad), PGIMER (Chandigarh), Manipal Hospital and Narayana Health (Bengaluru), and Tata Memorial Hospital (Mumbai)—the study analyses a decade of procedures using da Vinci robotic systems.

Lead author Dr Rooma Sinha, Honorary Professor and Chief Gynaecologist at Apollo Health City, noted that over 70 per cent of robotic procedures were performed in the last five years, reflecting a strong upward trend. She emphasised that RAS offers superior precision and recovery benefits, especially in managing benign conditions such as fibroids, endometriosis, and adenomyosis.

"Robotic surgery enables shorter hospital stays and less blood loss—crucial for women balancing home and work," added Dr Vanita Jain, Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at PGIMER, Chandigarh.

The study underscores the precision required for fertility-preserving procedures like myomectomy, where robotic systems offer better visualisation and control. Dr Subhas C Saha, another key contributor from PGIMER, highlighted ongoing efforts to reduce costs by using fewer robotic arms and multifunctional tools. While insurance coverage for RAS is gradually expanding, the study urges broader support to make this technology more accessible. "Wider reimbursement can ensure more women benefit from advanced surgical care," Dr Saha concluded. Women's Health Month aims to raise awareness and encourage women to prioritise their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. *—PTI*

30 MAY DEADLINE

Apologise or face ban: KFCC to Haasan

Kannada activists protest at SBM Circle in Bengaluru on Thursday against actor Kamal Haasan *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BENGALURU, 29 MAY

Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) said on Thursday that it will not allow the release of Kamal Haasan's film 'Thug Life' in Karnataka unless he issues a public apology by 30 May for his controversial remark "Kannada was born out of Tamil".

KFCC president M Narasimhalu said, "Many Kannada groups have demanded a ban on his movie. So, we discussed the matter and decided that he should apologise. We agree that what he did was wrong, and we are trying to meet and talk to him."

KFCC former president Sa Ra Govindu said on Thursday, "We have no sympathy for Kamal Haasan. If he does not issue a public apology today or tomorrow, we will support Kannada activists and will protest fiercely. Under no circumstances will we allow the film's release unless he apologises publicly."

Actor Jayamala, who headed KFCC between 2008 and 2010, said, "Whenever there is a language controversy, all Kannadigas must unite. It is our duty. Whether Kamal Haasan spoke knowingly or unknowingly, his statement was wrong. Kannada was not born out of Tamil."

She also said there is nothing wrong in expressing regret for a mistake instead of trying to justify it.

"We are trying to talk to him and help him understand that his words were deeply hurtful to Kannadigas. It is his moral responsibility to apologise," she added. Kamal Haasan on Wednesday clarified that he made the remark on Kannada out of love for the language, and "love will never apologise". *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Court reserves order on Lalu's railway 'scam'

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

A Delhi court has reserved its order on whether to frame charges against RJD chief Lalu Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi, their son Tejashwi Yadav, and others in a case involving alleged irregularities at the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). Special Judge Vishal Gogne set 23 July, for the decision after concluding arguments on the charges. The accused have been allowed one week to submit a brief synopsis of their arguments. The case concerns alleged corruption and conspiracy linked to the manipulation of tenders for leasing two IRCTC hotels in Puri and Ranchi to a private firm, Sujata Hotels. Lalu Prasad, who was railway minister during the UPA government, denies the charges. *—PTI*

Kejriwal moves court for passport renewal

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, an accused in the Delhi excise policy case, has approached a court seeking a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to renew his expired passport. His lawyer informed the court that the passport expired in 2018, and Kejriwal is seeking a 10-year renewal. Special Judge Dig Vinay Singh issued notices to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), asking for their responses by 4 June. The CBI told the court it is ready to argue on framing charges in the corruption case linked to the now-withdrawn Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22. While the CBI is investigating corruption, the ED is probing money laundering arising from the same alleged policy irregularities. *—PTI*

Man threatens to burn himself near Fadnavis' home

MUMBAI, 29 MAY

A 39-year-old man from Solapur district was detained by police after threatening to set himself on fire outside Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' official residence, 'Varsha', in south Mumbai. The incident occurred on Wednesday, when Ajit Maidagi arrived at the residence carrying a 100ml bottle of petrol. Police intervened before he could harm himself and took him to Malabar Hill police station. He was reportedly upset over a pending matter he had raised at the Mantralaya, the state secretariat, though details were not disclosed. A case has been registered against him, and he was counselled by officers. *—PTI*

Didn't talk trade: India on US' ceasefire claim

MEA repeats that ceasefire was reached by DGMOs; declines Sharif's latest offer for talks

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

India on Thursday said the issue of trade did not come up at all in talks between Indian and American leaders during its military clashes with Pakistan, virtually rejecting Washington's repeated claims that its offer of trade stopped the confrontation.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told a New York court that India and Pakistan reached a "tenuous ceasefire" only after President Donald Trump offered both nations trading access with the US to avert a "full-scale war".

"From the time Operation Sindoor commenced on 7 May till the understanding on cessation of firing and military action was reached on 10 May, there were conversations between Indian and the US leaders on the evolving military situation," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "The issue of trade or tariff did not come up in any of those discussions.

EAM spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India only discussed military with the US, in response to President Donald Trump's claims *PHOTO: PTI*

"The External Affairs Minister has made it clear that the cessation of firing was decided upon in direct contacts between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan," he said.

Jaiswal also said that talks with Pakistan can only happen if it stops cross-border terrorism.

His comments came in response to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressing willingness to hold peace talks with India to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, terrorism, water and trade.

"We would like to reiterate that terrorism and talks cannot go together," Jaiswal said. "The Indus Water Treaty will remain in abeyance till Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support to cross-border terrorism." *—PTI*

Misri, US reaffirm desire to maintain regional stability

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 29 MAY

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau reaffirmed their "shared desire" to maintain regional stability and peace and discussed the India-US bilateral agenda.

Misri had a "great first meeting" with Landau in Washington on Wednesday, the Indian Embassy in Washington said on X.

The Indian Embassy said Misri and Landau agreed that tech-trade-talent will shape the India-US partnership in the 21st century.

They reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the leadership's vision and to strengthen the India-US comprehensive global strategic partnership, the embassy said.

In another post on X, the Embassy added that Misri led the Indian delegation along with Deputy National Security Advisor Pavan Kapoor for the inter-agency discussions on the India-US COMPACT for the 21st century. *—PTI*

R'than ex-Cong worker detained for 'spying' for Pak

JAIPUR/NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI 29 MAY

A Rajasthan government employee was detained in Jaisalmer on suspicion of espionage for Pakistan. Sources said he worked as an assistant to former Congress minister Shale Mohammad. Mohammed was a minister under the Ashok Gelhot government.

Shakur Khan, who works in the district employment office, was found to have phone numbers associated with Pakistan stored on his device, an official said. He was in touch with people in Pakistan and shared security related updates from Jaisalmer, it is alleged.

The official said Khan was detained on Wednesday night by an intelligence department team.

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya claimed that Khan visited Pakistan several times without informing the government, Malviya claimed. "Pakistan-worship is in the blood of Congress."

Shale Mohammad *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Similarly, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Maharashtra Police arrested a resident of Thane for allegedly spying for Pakistan, a senior official said on Thursday.

The accused was "honey-trapped" by a Pakistani agent who posed as a woman and befriended him on Facebook, said the official.

He was found to have shared sensitive information about a vital installation with the `Pakistan Intelligence Operative' through WhatsApp from November 2024 to March 2025, the official said. *—PTI*

Two 'hybrid militants' of LeT apprehended in Poonch

Security forces apprehended two "hybrid militants" of the LeT in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district, officials said on Thursday. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation on Wednesday night in the Baskuchan area of Poonch. Two AK-56 rifles, four magazines, 102 rounds and two hand grenades were recovered. "Hybrid militants" refers to those who are not listed as ultras but are radicalised enough to carry out a terror strike.

Himachal youth held after 'sensitive' content found on phone

An 18-year-old youth was arrested on Thursday after sensitive content which could endanger the sovereignty, unity and integrity of the country was allegedly found in his mobile phone, police said. The accused, Abhishek, was a resident of Sukahar in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district. Abhishek, reportedly a college dropout, was monitored closely for several days, before he was arrested.

Pune teen, held for Op Sindoor post, appears for exam: HC told

The Pune teen student, arrested for her social media post criticising the Indian government over Operation Sindoor and later released on bail, has appeared for her semester examination under requisite security, her lawyer told the Bombay High Court on Thursday. The student had missed two papers and as many practical exams while she was in custody, her lawyer said. As per HC's directives, special arrangements have been made for the student to appear for exams, the college said. "The girl will be giving her exams in a separate classroom. A separate supervisor will be assigned for her exams and two security guards, one male and one female, will accompany her on the campus for her safety".

Tharoor slams 'zealots' criticising his LoC remark

An all-party Indian parliamentary delegation, led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, meets Panamanian Foreign Minister Javier Martínez-Acha in Panama *PHOTO: PTI*

PANAMA CITY, 29 MAY

Amid Congress leaders' swipes at him over his surgical strike remarks, party leader Shashi Tharoor on Thursday said that for those "zealots fulminating" about his ignorance, he was speaking only about reprisals for terrorists and not wars.

Tharoor said his remarks were preceded by reference to several attacks in recent years.

"For those zealots fulminating about my supposed ignorance of Indian valour across the LoC in the past, I was clearly and explicitly speaking only about reprisals for terrorist attacks and not about previous wars. My remarks were preceded by a reference to the several attacks that have taken place in recent years alone," Tharoor said.

"But as usual, critics and trolls are welcome to distort my views and words as they see fit. I genuinely have better things to do," he added.

The Congress took swipes at him, with Udit Raj saying that he should be made a "super spokesperson of the BJP".

Meanwhile, the BJP accused the Congress of equating the foreign delegation with terrorists and demanded action.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh had reportedly remarked "our MPs are roaming and terrorists are also roaming" *—PTI*

BJP leaders Baijayant Jay Panda, Nishikant Dubey, Satnam Singh Sandhu and Rekha Sharma, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and others during a meeting with the DG of Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute of Diplomatic Studies Mushabab Al-Qahtani, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia *PHOTO: PTI*

Delegations continue visits to win over int'l community

FREETOWN, 29 MAY

The seven multi-party delegations bound for 33 global capitals met with leaders in Sierra Leone, South Africa, Italy, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, to garner international backing for India's fight against terrorism.

In Sierra Leone, a multi-party delegation led by Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Eknath Shinde met with Deputy Defence Minister Muana Brima Massaquoi to discuss India's strategic approach to counter-terrorism.

Similarly, in South Africa, the delegation, headed by NCP MP Supriya Sule, received support from the Democratic Alliance for India's counter-terrorism stance.

Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia, a delegation led by BJP MP Baijayant Panda engaged with security experts and officials.

In Italy, the delegation reaffirmed India's commitment to fighting terrorism while bolstering strategic partnerships

In Indonesia, the delegation led by JD(U) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha met leaders of the National Mandate Party (PAN) to convey New Delhi's unequivocal stance against terrorism. *—PTI*

'FIVE PROBLEMS PLAGUE BENGAL'

Modi digs into TMC over Murshidabad, jobs scam

ALIPURDUAR/GANGTOK 29 MAY

Launching a blistering attack on the TMC government in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday accused it of fostering violence, corruption and lawlessness, claiming that people in the state are desperate to oust the "nirmam sarkar" (cruel government).

Addressing a public rally in north Bengal's Alipurduar, Modi cited the recent incidents of communal violence as grim reminders of the TMC's "cruelty and indifference".

"Today, West Bengal is grappling with a series of crises. People don't want nirmam sarkar," he said. "Look at what happened in Murshidabad and Malda. Just imagine the horror: members of the ruling party mark out homes and set them on fire, while the police stand by as mute spectators."

With the assembly elections set to take place in the state next year, Modi listed five major crises that are allegedly "plaguing" Bengal.

Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others in Alipurduar, West Bengal *PHOTO: PTI*

"First is the widespread violence and lawlessness that are tearing apart the fabric of society. Second is the growing sense of insecurity among mothers and sisters" he alleged. The third crisis is the "despair due to unemployment", while the fourth is the "pervasive corruption".

"The fifth crisis stems from the self-serving politics of the ruling party, which is stripping the poor of their rightful entitlements."

Slamming the TMC over the multi-crore teacher recruitment scam, Modi said, "This is not just ruining the lives of a few thousand teachers, but the entire education system is deteriorating." *—PTI*

Modi inaugurates slew of projects in West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar

Modi inaugurated a slew of projects in Sikkim, including a statue of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and laid the foundation stones for several other projects. "Sikkim has the potential to become a hub of adventure sports," he remarked. In Patna, he inaugurated the new terminal building of the Patna Airport and laid the foundation stone for a new civil enclave at the Bihta airport on the outskirts of the city. In Bengal, Modi laid the foundation stone for a city gas distribution (CGD) project worth Rs 1,010 crore in West Bengal's Alipurduar district.

What Modi said today is not only shocking but unfortunate. His party leaders have suggested 'Operation Bengal' like Operation Sindoor... Please remember every woman has respect, they accept sindoor only from her husband. The way you (Modi) are talking, you are not the husband of everybody; why are you not giving sindoor to your Mrs?... First, he used to call himself a tea-seller, then a 'chowkidar', and now he has come to sell sindoor....The Centre named it 'Operation Sindoor' for political gains ahead of upcoming elections

-Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal Chief Minister

Cong flays PM for likely spl parl session on emergency

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The Congress party has alleged that the Modi government is using plans for a special session of Parliament on 25-26 June, marking the 50th anniversary of the Emergency, as a "diversion and distraction" from pressing national issues. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh highlighted ongoing concerns regarding the Pahalgam terror attack and the government's failure to convene an all-party meeting to discuss the fallout.

Ramesh noted that both the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha had previously written to Prime Minister Modi requesting the session, which was rejected. Instead, the Congress argues that the focus should be on contemporary threats, such as terrorism, rather than historical events.

- The Congress argued that the focus of the special session should be on contemporary threats, rather than historical events

Congress accuses centre of ignoring VP Dhankhar

In a related context, the Congress also addressed Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's calls for greater involvement of farmers in India's economy. Ramesh stated that the Vice President's insights are often ignored by the government, which prioritises "slogans and filmi dialogues" over tangible governance. Dhankhar has urged for significant increases in farmers' income, stressing the need for their active participation in the agricultural trade and value addition. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Veteran film star, writer Rajesh dies in Chennai at 75

CHENNAI, 29 MAY

Veteran film star and writer Rajesh has died at the age of 75 due to age-related ailments. He was admitted to hospital following complaints of unease, but was declared dead on arrival. His passing has prompted condolences from numerous colleagues, including Tamil superstar Rajinikanth, who expressed his sorrow on social media, calling Rajesh a "wonderful man". Actress Radikaa Sarathkumar also shared her shock, recalling their collaborations and his extensive knowledge of cinema. Over his five-decade career, Rajesh featured in over 150 films across Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu languages, gaining acclaim for roles in titles such as 'Thaneer Thaneer' and 'Andha Ezhu Naatkal'. He was also involved with the Nadigar Sangam.—*PTI*

Odisha youth dies during home guard recruitment

BHUBANESWAR, 29 MAY

A young candidate dies and several others fell ill during a physical test for home guard recruitment in Odisha's Gajapati district. The victim, Sulant Mishal, hailing from Parisal village, collapsed just 30 seconds before completing a 2km run on Thursday morning. Despite being rushed to the district hospital, he was declared dead upon arrival. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed his condolences and announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh for Mishal's family from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The seven other candidates, who fell ill are currently receiving treatment, prompting authorities to review the recruitment procedures to ensure the safety of participants in future events. —*PTI*

Lawrence Bishnoi gang's gunman killed in UP

HAPUR/LUCKNOW, 29 MAY

A sharpshooter of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang was killed in a police encounter in the Uttar Pradesh's Hapur Kotwali area on 28 May. The deceased, identified as Naveen Kumar, was wanted for multiple serious crimes, including murder and violations of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, A joint operation involving Uttar Pradesh police and Delhi police led to a gunfight, during which Kumar sustained severe injuries. Though rushed to a local hospital, he succumbed to his wounds. Kumar had an extensive criminal record with at least 20 cases against him in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. He had been previously arrested under the Arms Act and for murder. —*PTI*

WB man kills parents and stabs four, arrested

KOLKATA, 29 MAY

A man has been arrested after allegedly murdering his parents in Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal, before stabbing four individuals at a nearby orphanage. The accused, Humayun Kabir, reportedly attacked staff members at the Sharif Orphanage in Bongaon, two of whom were teachers. Kabir's parents were discovered dead outside their Memari residence, having suffered multiple stab wounds. A mob stormed the police station demanding his handover, injuring two officers in the process. Kabir, once employed at an MNC, had been living with his parents following personal hardships. While his motive was unclear, he may have been struggling with mental health issues. 10 people have been detained for the mob assault as investigations into both the murders and stabbings continue. Kabir's sister has also filed a complaint.—*PTI*

Monsoon leaves trail of destruction in Kerala, M'rashtra

Red alert in 3 Kerala districts; 16 dead in Maharashtra

T'PURAM/MUMBAI/ BHUBANESWAR, 29 MAY

As monsoon rains caused widespread damage in Kerala, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday issued a red alert for eight districts of the state.

The IMD issued red alerts for Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod districts and an orange alert in the remaining districts.

A red alert was issued for Idukki, Kannur and Kasaragod for 30 May and an orange alert for 11 other districts.

Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms with gusty winds will occur in in some parts of the state.

Water levels in Manimala and Achankovil rivers in Pathanamthitta, Meenachil river in Kottayam, Korapuzha river in Kozhikode and Kabani river in Wayanad were steadily rising.

The inclement weather caused widespread damage with trees being uprooted, electricity poles being dislodged and flooding of low-lying areas.

Several houses and crops were destroyed across the state, with hundreds of people being shifted to relief camps.

Uprooted trees and broken branches lie along a road after heavy rains pummelled in Idukki district **PHOTO: PTI**

Maharashtra

16 persons were killed and 18 injured in Maharashtra in rain related incidents over the last five days.

Almost all regions of the state were affected due to heavy rains.

Deaths were reported in Pune, Thane, Latur, Bhandara, Raigad, Ahilyanagar, Nagpur, Wardha, Chandrapur, Mumbai suburban and Gondia districts.

Odisha

Heavy to very heavy rainfall has been predicted in parts of Odisha.

The IMD issued orange alert in Ganjam, Gajapati, Koraput, Rayagada, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Nawarangpur, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Jagatsinghpur districts.

Thunderstorms with lightning and heavy rainfall will occur in Kandhamal, Puri, Nayagarh, Khurdha, Cuttack, Nuapada, Bolangir, Keonjhar and Jajpur. Similar warning was also issued for the districts of Dhenkanal, Sonepur, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sudargarh, Angul, Deogarh, Boudh, Malkangiri, Bargarh, and the IMD said. —*PTI*

Kerala declares shipwreck off state coast a disaster

T'PURAM, 29 MAY

The Kerala government on Thursday declared the wreckage of a cargo ship flying the Liberian flag off the state's coast a state-specific disaster.

The vessel, MSC ELSA-3, carrying over 643 containers, including hazardous cargo, sank about 14.6 nautical miles from the coast near Thottappalli in Alappuzha district on 25 May raising environmental concerns.

In an official order, the state government said the maritime incident has raised serious environmental concerns, including the potential for oil spills and drifting debris, such as cargo, along Kerala's coastline.

"Considering the potentially serious environmental, social, and economic impact of the ship wreckage, the government hereby declare the wreckage of ship M/s ELSA 3 in the Arabian sea 14.6 nautical miles off the Kerala coast as a state-specific disaster," the order said.

Tinku Biswal, principal secretary of the State Disaster Management Department, said that the shipwreck posed a serious threat to Kerala's 640km coast, both environmentally, socially and economically.

Earlier the Indian Coast Guard had activated full pollution response preparedness and ICG aircraft equipped with advanced oil spill detection systems were pressed into action to conduct aerial surveillance.

The State Disaster Management Authority will mobilise resources, personnel and funds money to expedite relief efforts along the coastline. —*PTI*

The vessel carrying over 643 containers sank 14.6 nautical miles from the coast along Alappuzha district, raising environmental concerns **PHOTO: PTI**

POWER WORKERS OPPOSE DISCOM PRIVATISATION

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Over 27 lakh electricity workers staged a protest across the country on Thursday against the privatisation of two discoms in Uttar Pradesh.

The UP government has decided to privatise Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd and Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd, which cover 42 out of 75 districts of the state, said Shailendra Dubey, chairman of All India Power Engineers Federation.

UP Power Corporation Limited and some senior government are in collusion with selected private houses. They want to sell discom assets worth lakhs of crores of rupees to private houses at throw away prices, Dubey alleged.

Due to wrong power purchase agreements in UP, discoms have to pay Rs 6,761 crore annually to companies without purchasing a single unit of electricity. —*PTI*

RETURN TO INDIA ORDERED

Ex-SIB chief gets interim relief in phone tapping case

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

T Prabhakar Rao **PHOTO: PTI**

The Supreme Court on Thursday granted interim protection from coercive action to former chief of Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) in Telangana, T Prabhakar Rao, key accused in the phone-tapping case.

A bench comprising Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma directed Rao to appear before the investigation officer and said he be given his passport.

Rao is suspected to be in the US. A red corner notice was issued against him and his passport revoked.

Rao was also directed to give an undertaking that he would return to India within three days after receiving his passport.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior advocate Sidharth Luthra vehemently opposed Rao's plea seeking anticipatory bail.

The matter is posted for hearing on 5 August.

Rao has moved SC challenging an order of the Telangana High Court dismissing his plea for anticipatory bail.

A Hyderabad court stated that against Rao may be declared a "proclaimed offender" if he failed to appear before the court by 20 June.

The court can order attachment of properties of a proclaimed offender.

A suspended DSP of SIB was among four police officials who were arrested by Hyderabad Police since March 2024, for allegedly erasing the intelligence information from various electronic gadgets as well as for alleged phone-tapping during the previous BRS regime. They were subsequently granted bail.

The accused had allegedly developed profiles of several persons unauthorisedly and were accused of monitoring them clandestinely and illegally in SIB and using them in a partisan manner to favour a political party at the behest of some persons and also conspiracy in destroying the records to cause disappearance of evidence of their crimes. —*PTI*

SC to hear plea in Jamia Nagar demolition move

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea against demolitions in Delhi's Jamia Nagar. A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai initially advised the petitioner to approach the Delhi HC, but later agreed to intervene. Residents received notices dated 22 May, citing alleged encroachment on land owned by the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department. The move follows an 8 May, Supreme Court directive for lawful demolition of unauthorised structures in Okhla village.—*PTI*

Apex court drops Michel's plea in Agusta case

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The Supreme Court of India dismissed a plea by British national Christian Michel James, accused in the Rs 3,600-crore AgustaWestland money laundering case. He challenged a Delhi High Court order requiring him to provide a local address before release on bail. The bench remarked that if he could pursue legal action, he could also arrange an address. James, extradited from Dubai in 2018, has been in Tihar Jail for over six years and claimd he lacked an Indian residence. —*PTI*

Nine-judge HC bench to decide on FIR quashing

PRAYAGRAJ, 29 MAY

The Allahabad High Court has referred to a nine-judge bench the legal questions concerning a high court's power to quash an FIR under the Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), which is now the Section 528 of Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita.

A seven-judge bench held in the case of Ramlal Yadav and others vs State of UP and others (1989) that for quashing the FIR, a plea under Section 482 of the CrPC would not be maintainable and an appropriate remedy would be to file a plea under Article 226 (writ jurisdiction) of the Constitution.

The single bench of Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal, while respectfully disagreeing with the seven-judge bench ruling, referred the matter to a nine-judge bench invoking the spirit of "judicial discipline" and stare decisis.

Stare decisis, a Latin term meaning "to stand by things decided", is a legal principle that directs courts to adhere to precedent.

The court found the seven-judge bench ruling "obsolete" in light of the Supreme Court's decisions in State of Haryana & others vs Bhajan Lal & others (1990) and Neeharika Infrastructure Pvt Ltd vs State of Maharashtra and others (2021). —*PTI*

Pune doc in Porsche case held over illegal kidney transplant

PUNE, 29 MAY

- Taware was arrested last year for allegedly tampering with the blood samples of a teenager accused of crashing a Porsche car

Police on Thursday arrested Pune's Sassoon General Hospital's former medical superintendent Ajay Taware in connection with an alleged kidney transplant racket at city-based private hospital Ruby Hall Clinic, officials said.

Taware is currently in the Yerwada Central Jail following his arrest last year for allegedly tampering with the blood samples of a teenager accused of crashing a Porsche car into a motorbike, killing two people. "We have taken Ajay Taware into custody in the kidney racket case and he will be produced before the court today," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Nikhil Pingale said.

The Pune police in May 2022 registered a case against 15 persons, including the managing trustee of the Ruby Hall Clinic, for an alleged malpractice during a kidney transplant. Taware was head of the Regional Authorisation Committee that approved kidney transplants at that time.

On 25 March, 2022, a woman in lieu of money posed as the wife of a man who needed a transplant and donated her kidney to a young woman patient. In turn, the young woman's mother donated her kidney to the man.

Four days after the transplant at the Ruby Hall Clinic, the woman exposed the scam over a payment dispute. —*PTI*

Man beheaded in Odisha over suspected sorcery

BHAWANIPATNA, 29 MAY

A 65-year-old man was beheaded allegedly on suspicion of practising sorcery in Odisha's Kalahandi district.

The headless body of the victim, identified as Rupsingh Majhi of Deypur village under Kalampur police limits, was recovered from a village pond.

Police said Rupsingh was killed on the night of 18 May. His decapitated body was found in Baijhali Sagar, a large pond in the village, while a search is still underway for the missing head. Police arrested a 21-year-old suspect from Goa, who later confessed to the murder. —*PTI*

'NARI SHAKTI' IN ACTION

17 women cadets graduate from NDA for 1st time

PUNE, 29 MAY

Marking a historic moment for women in Indian armed forces, the first batch of 17 female cadets graduated from the National Defence Academy (NDA) here on Thursday and were conferred degrees along with more than 300 male cadets.

The convocation ceremony of 148th NDA course was held at the academy, which provides officers to the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.

NDA Commandant Vice Admiral Gurcharan Singh hailed the graduation of the maiden batch of female cadets hoping that they will prove their mettle as exemplary leaders.

339 cadets received degrees from the Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. Of them, 84 cadets were awarded with the BSc degree, 85 with computer science degree, 59 with BA degree and 111 with BTech degree.

Three of the 17 female cadets who graduated from the National Defence Academy in Pune on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Poonam Tandon, vice chancellor of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University, was the chief guest on the occasion.

"... Girls, your achievement today is not just your own. It is a breakthrough for thousands of young women across India who look up to you. You are the torchbearers of change, courage, and capability," Tandon said.

Cadet Lucky Kumar secured the first position in the science stream.

Battalion Cadet Captain Prince Kumar Singh Kushwah topped the computer science stream, while Division Cadet Captain Shreeti Daksh, one of the 17 female cadets, stood first in the arts stream. Academy Cadet Captain Udayveer Singh Negi emerged as the topper in the BTech stream.

The passing out parade of the 148th course will be held at the NDA on 30 May.

In 2021, the Union Public Service Commission allowed women to apply to the defence academy following a Supreme Court direction. —*PTI*

M'rashtra doc booked for trying to kill Covid patient

LATUR, 29 MAY

- In an audio clip of the purported conversation, Deshpande was allegedly heard saying, 'Don't allow anyone to go inside, just kill that Dayami woman'

Police have registered an FIR against a government doctor in Maharashtra's Latur district for allegedly instructing a colleague to "kill" a Covid-19 patient during the pandemic in 2021.

An audio clip surfaced recently on social media of the purported conversation between the accused, Shashikant Deshpande, the then additional district surgeon at the Udgir Government Hospital in Latur and Shashikant Dange, who was posted at a Covid-19 care centre.

The clip was recorded during the peak of Covid-19 crisis in 2021, when hospitals were crowded with patients and resources were scarce.

The patient, Kausar Fatima, wife of Dayami Ajimoddin Gaussoddin, 53, later recovered from the disease.

In the conversation, Deshpande was allegedly heard saying, "Don't allow anyone to go inside, just kill that Dayami woman."

To this, Dange responds cautiously, noting that oxygen support had already been reduced.

Based on a complaint by Gaussoddin, the Udgir city police registered a case against Deshpande on 24 May for deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings and other offences. —*PTI*

72 YEARS OF CONQUERING MOUNT EVEREST

Nepal's mountaineering community marked the 72nd anniversary of the first successful summit of Mount Everest on 29 May, 1953, by New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa of India/Nepal (inset). Celebrated as International Everest Day, climbers and guides rallied in tribute to all who have scaled the 29,035-foot peak. Nepal, home to eight of the world's highest mountains, draws hundreds of climbers annually, creating vital jobs for locals who support expeditions across the Himalayas ***PHOTO: PTI***

"Sagarmatha : Identity and Pride of Nepal"
"विश्वको सर्वोच्च शिखरसगरमाथा : नेपालको पहिचान र गौरव"
72nd INTERNATIONAL SAGARMATHA DAY
७२ औं अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सगरमाथा दिवस - २०
29 May 2025

Trump's trade policy in turmoil as court halts tariffs

A federal court in New York handed President Donald Trump a big setback Wednesday, blocking his audacious plan to impose massive taxes on imports from almost every country in the world.

A three-judge panel of the US Court of International Trade ruled that Trump overstepped his authority when he invoked the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act to declare a national emergency and justify the sweeping tariffs.

The tariffs overturned decades of US trade policy, disrupted global commerce, rattled financial markets and raised the risk of higher prices and recession in the United States and around the world.

The US Court of International Trade has jurisdiction over civil cases involving trade. Its decisions can be appealed to the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington and ultimately to the Supreme Court, where the legal challenges to Trump' tariffs are widely expected to end up.

On 2 April, Trump imposed so-called reciprocal tariffs of up to 50 per cent on countries ***PHOTO: PTI***

Which tariffs did the court block?

The court's decision blocks the tariffs Trump slapped last month on almost all US trading partners and levies he imposed before that on China, Mexico and Canada.

On 2 April, Trump imposed so-called reciprocal tariffs of up to 50 per cent on countries with which the United States runs a trade deficit and 10 per cent baseline tariffs on almost everybody else.

He later suspended the reciprocal tariffs for 90 days to give countries time to agree to reduce barriers to US exports. But he kept the baseline tariffs in place. Claiming extraordinary power to act without congressional approval, he justified the taxes under IEEPA by declaring the United States' longstanding trade deficits "a national emergency."

In February, he'd invoked the law to impose tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China, saying that the illegal flow of immigrants and drugs across the US border amounted to a national emergency and that the three countries needed to do more to stop it.

The US Constitution gives Congress the power to set taxes, including tariffs. But lawmakers have gradually let presidents assume more power over tariffs — and Trump has made the most of it.

The tariffs are being challenged in at least seven lawsuits. In the ruling Wednesday, the trade court combined two of the cases — one brought by five small businesses and another by 12 US states.

The ruling does leave in place other Trump tariffs, including those on foreign steel, aluminium and autos. But those levies were invoked under a different law that required a Commerce Department investigation and could not be imposed at the president's own discretion.

Why did the court rule against the president?

The administration had argued that courts had approved then-President Richard Nixon's emergency use of tariffs in a 1971 economic and financial crisis that arose when the United States suddenly devalued the dollar by ending a policy that linked the US currency to the price of gold.

The Nixon administration successfully cited its authority under the 1917 Trading With Enemy Act, which preceded and supplied some of the legal language later used in IEPPA.

The court disagreed, deciding that Trump's sweeping tariffs exceeded his authority to regulate imports under IEEPA. It also said the tariffs did nothing to deal with problems they were supposed to address. In their case, the states noted that America's trade deficits hardly amount of a sudden emergency. The United States has racked them up for 49 straight years in good times and bad.

So where does this leave Trump's trade agenda?

Wendy Cutler, a former US trade official who is now vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute, says the court's decision "throws the president's trade policy into turmoil."

"Partners negotiating hard during the 90-day day tariff pause period may be tempted to hold off making further concessions to the US until there is more legal clarity," she said.

Likewise, companies will have to reassess the way they run their supply chains, perhaps speeding up shipments to the United States to offset the risk that the tariffs will be reinstated on appeal.

The trade court noted that Trump retains more limited power to impose tariffs to address trade deficits under another statute, the Trade Act of 1974. But that law restricts tariffs to 15 per cent and only for 150 days with countries with which the United States runs big trade deficits.

For now, the trade court's ruling "destroys the Trump administration's rationale for using federal emergency powers to impose tariffs, which oversteps congressional authority and contravenes any notion of due process," said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University.

"The ruling makes it clear that the broad tariffs imposed unilaterally by Trump represent an overreach of executive power." —*PTI*

SALAR ساہر

Nordic nations embrace total defence as risk of war rises

More than 80 years after Norwegian resistance fighters sabotaged a Nazi weapons factory in Kongsberg during World War II, the quiet town is once again preparing for the worst. In the face of heightened global tensions and growing fears of Russian aggression, local authorities are taking serious steps to bolster defences.

The municipality, located 85km southwest of Oslo and home to 27,000 residents, is dusting off Cold War-era bomb shelters, installing new satellite communications systems, and coordinating closely with the military to support Western troop deployments in the event of conflict.

"The lesson we learned from Ukraine is that everybody pitched in," said Odd John Resser, Kongsberg's Emergency Planning Officer. "Breweries made Molotov cocktails, schools were moved to shelters, and weapons factories increased production."

Across the Nordic region, countries are embracing the concept of "total defence" — a strategy that mobilises the whole of society to defend against military and non-military threats. It reflects a growing belief that national resilience must go beyond just armed forces.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Western officials have accused Moscow of orchestrating a campaign of sabotage, cyberattacks, and arson across Europe. As confidence in long-standing security alliances like NATO wavers, nations such as Norway are stepping up their self-reliance.

In May, Norway published its first-ever national security strategy, warning that the country now faces its most serious security situation since World War II. "After decades of peace," it declared, "a new era has begun for Norway and for Europe."

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre echoed the urgency. "What is now happening in Ukraine has to be a wake-up call for all," he told the Associated Press. "We must strengthen our defence to prevent anything like that from happening to us."

As part of this renewed focus, Norway announced in January that bomb shelters will again be required in new buildings, a practice that ceased in 1998. Residents are also urged to keep at least seven days' worth of food and water.

"How would you and your nearest family manage if the electricity supply was cut off for a longer period? What would you do if the water supply failed?" a Norwegian emergency preparedness handbook asks.

While not all residents in Kongsberg meet the seven-day benchmark, most told AP they had some form of supplies. "Russia is very close to Norway and you don't know what's going to happen," said Katina Bakke, who works in a local sports shop. "I would rather be prepared than not prepared."

Other Nordic nations are also ramping up readiness. Sweden appointed its first minister for civil defence in 2022, with citizens aged 16 to 70 expected to serve in the military or support services in wartime. Finland's extensive civil defence infrastructure can shelter 86 per cent of its population. In Helsinki, a massive underground bunker with beds, sinks, and even a hockey pitch stands ready to host 6,000 people in the event of nuclear fallout.

Though Norway is not expecting an imminent war, Kongsberg's strategic importance cannot be overstated. It is the headquarters of the Kongsberg Group, a major weapons manufacturer whose precision-guided missiles are currently in use in Ukraine. A new factory, opened in 2024, has significantly ramped up production to meet European demand.

In May, local authorities met with the military to develop plans for supporting Western troops — including logistics and healthcare, in case of a large-scale deployment. "If the allies are coming to Norway — staying, training, doing war work or in transit — we will have a big task for the whole community," said Resser.

Preparing for war also enhances readiness for other crises, such as pandemics, extreme weather, or power outages, he added. Norway's vulnerability was underscored in April when a massive blackout disrupted Spain and Portugal, raising questions about the resilience of European infrastructure.

Experts warn that sabotage is no longer an abstract Cold War-era fear. "Sabotage has become one of the threats that is now on the radar to an extent that we haven't seen probably since the Second World War," said Even Tvedt, Chief Security Officer at the Kongsberg Group.

Tvedt cited recent suspicious incidents, including a 2024 attempt by an activist to destroy fighter jet engines, illegal drone activity, and unauthorised efforts to breach factory perimeters. While it's often unclear whether such events are coordinated or isolated, the growing frequency suggests a genuine threat.

Matthew Redhead, a national security expert at the Royal United Services Institute, said Russia's disruptive activity in Europe is reaching "pre-war" levels. "The threat is rising," added Norwegian Defence Minister Tore O Sandvik, noting that Russia could target critical infrastructure such as energy grids, internet cables, and water supplies.

"People further from the Russian border may not think they're on the front line," said Redhead. "But freaking people out about this, at some point, is potentially quite necessary." —*PTI*

Experts say preparing for war also enhances readiness for other crises such as power outages. Europeans nations including Portugal, Spain and France were hit by power outages recently ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS

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After a chaotic 6 months, South Koreans will elect a new president

On 3 June, South Koreans will head to the polls to choose the country's new president. The election may draw to a close one of the most chaotic and contentious periods in the country's post-1987 democratic era.

South Korea has been embroiled in a political crisis since December, when former President Yoon Suk Yeol disastrously declared martial law.

Yoon ordered security forces to block lawmakers from entering the National Assembly, leading to a dramatic late night confrontation. His unconstitutional decree was overturned after just six hours.

The fall-out was equally dramatic: Yoon was impeached and removed from office in a drawn-out process that was not finally resolved until April.

This period coincided with massive street demonstrations both opposing and supporting Yoon, a far-right assault on a courthouse and a physical stand-off between investigators and Yoon's personal security team.

The country, meanwhile, has cycled through three short-lived caretaker leaders.

With weak economic growth and high costs of living, in addition to an equally challenging security environment, South Korea is in desperate need of bold and effective leadership.

Who are the candidates?

The Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung is the clear frontrunner to be the next president, after finishing a close second in the previous 2022 election.

Recent polling put the veteran left-leaning politician at around 49% support as the race entered the final week.

This is a double-digit lead over his main conservative opponent, Kim Moon-soo, polling at 35%. Another conservative candidate, Lee Jun-seok, is polling at 11 per cent. Notably, for the first time since 2007, there are no female candidates standing to be president. The high levels of support for Lee Jae-myung suggest a widespread desire among the public to repudiate Yoon's martial law declaration. Kim, the labour minister in Yoon's administration, has apologised for December's declaration. But his opponents have continued to question him about it. Kim's challenge has been to build a coalition of moderates and mainstream conservatives who firmly opposed the martial law declaration, while also winning support from those who believe far-right conspiracy theories around election fraud. Yoon, the former president, is continuing to promote these narratives.

South Korea has been embroiled in a political crisis since December, when former President Yoon Suk Yeol disastrously declared martial law ***PHOTO: PTI***

Lee's compelling background

Lee Jae-myung's personal story has uplifting parallels with South Korea's own history of economic and political development.

Lee was born into poverty; the exact date of his birth is not known. He worked in factories from a very young age and permanently injured his left arm in an industrial accident when he was still a child.

Lee went on to earn a scholarship to study law and, by the late 1980s, had established himself as a labour lawyer and activist.

This activist image was highlighted when he live-streamed himself dramatically scaling a fence to enter the National Assembly and vote down Yoon's martial law declaration in December. He has previously compared himself to populist, progressive US Senator Bernie Sanders.

More recently, however, he has moderated his political rhetoric and policy platform to appeal to centrists and even some conservative voters.

This shift may also help shield Lee from the "red-baiting" claims left-leaning South Korean candidates typically face from conservative opponents that they are "communists", "pro-China", or "pro-North Korea". But Lee is also plagued by legal troubles, including corruption charges linked to a land development project. These charges, frequently highlighted by his opponents, risk derailing his win.

What are the main issues?

Some international commentators have focused on how the next president will handle North Korea. South Koreans, however, are more interested in the candidates' plans to fix the country's troubled economy. Lee Jae-myung has pledged to immediately establish an emergency economic taskforce if he takes office. There has also been a vigorous debate over South Korea's future energy policy. Kim favours expanding nuclear energy production to around 60% of the country's energy mix. Lee has voiced safety concerns about nuclear power, arguing "the era of building more reactors should come to an end". Additionally, questions remain over potential constitutional reform to end South Korea's so-called "imperial presidency" system, which has been blamed for centralising too much power in the hands of the president. The system dates back to the rewriting of the constitution following mass protests in 1987. This established direct presidential elections and a single, five-year term. Both Lee and Kim support changing this to a four-year, two-term presidential system, similar to the United States.

Big challenges lie ahead

On the international stage, the new leader will face an uphill battle negotiating with US President Donald Trump over his punitive tariffs. Trump imposed 25 per cent tariffs on South Korean goods in April, but lowered them temporarily to 10 per cent until early July. Before his impeachment, Yoon was widely reported to be practising his golf skills to attempt to find common ground with Trump, much as former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did. The new leader will also face massive challenges bringing South Korean society together in the current climate. Political polarisation and the spread of disinformation worsened under Yoon's presidency – and these trends will be hard to reverse.

—*The Conversation*

Slovak central banker convicted for bribery

BRATISLAVA, 29 MAY

Slovakia's central bank Governor, Peter Kažimír, was convicted of bribery and fined 200,000 euros ($225,000) by the Special Criminal Court in Pezinok. Kažimír, who sits on the European Central Bank's governing council, was found guilty of paying a Rs 48,000 bribe in 2017–18 to the head of the tax office during a property purchase. The case stems from his time as finance minister under former Prime Minister Robert Fico. His lawyers argued he should be acquitted due to recent legal changes reducing penalties for corruption. Kažimír, who was not in court, said he would appeal. His term ends Sunday. The ruling comes amid backlash over Fico's government weakening anti-corruption laws, including slashing punishments for graft. *—PTI*

Man missing after glacier wipes out Swiss village

GENEVA, 29 MAY

A 64-year-old man remains missing after a massive rock and icefall from the Birch Glacier triggered a landslide in the Swiss Alps on Wednesday. The avalanche devastated the village of Blatten in the Lötschental valley, with 90 per cent of it destroyed, according to State Councillor Stéphane Ganzer. Authorities had evacuated around 300 residents and all livestock earlier this month amid fears the glacier, holding 1.5 million cubic metres of unstable ice, could collapse. The landslide buried the Lonza River bed, raising flood concerns. Search and rescue efforts, including drone thermal imaging, are ongoing. Experts blame accelerated glacier melt on global warming—Switzerland lost 4per cent of its glacier volume in 2023, after a record 6 per cent in 2022. *—PTI*

S Korea military aircraft crashes; all four onboard killed

SEOUL, 29 MAY

A South Korean Navy P-3 patrol aircraft crashed during a training flight on Thursday, killing all the four crew members. The plane took off from Pohang at 1.43pm but crashed for unknown reasons near a hillside close to an apartment complex, sparking a fire. Emergency services, including firefighters and rescue teams, responded after reports from local residents. Two bodies have been recovered, with searches ongoing for the remaining crew. No civilian casualties have been reported. The navy has grounded all P-3 aircraft and launched a task force to investigate. Photos from Yonhap show black smoke and flames at the scene. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Stunt performer sues Kevin Costner for unscripted rape

LOS ANGELES, 29 MAY

Stunt performer Devyn LaBella has sued Kevin Costner, alleging she was subjected to an unscripted rape scene without warning, consent, or safety protocols while filming Horizon: An American Saga: Chapter 2. LaBella, the stunt double for lead Ella Hunt, claims Costner directed the scene on 2 May 2023, demanding multiple takes with no clear start or finish, causing her lasting trauma. The lawsuit states industry safeguards and union rules were ignored. Costner's lawyer denied the allegations, saying LaBella consented after rehearsals and showed no complaints during or after filming, citing a thank-you message she sent at wrap. The suit seeks damages, a public apology, mandatory sexual harassment training, and use of intimacy coordinators on future productions. *—PTI*

COURT BLOCKS TRUMP'S NEW TARIFFS ON FOREIGN GOODS

Says President exceeded authority under emergency powers law

WASHINGTON, 29 MAY

A federal court on Wednesday blocked US President Donald Trump from imposing sweeping tariffs on imports under an emergency-powers law, swiftly throwing into doubt Trump's signature set of economic policies that have rattled global financial markets, frustrated trade partners and raised broader fears about inflation intensifying and the economy slumping.

The ruling from a three-judge panel at the New York-based US Court of International Trade came after several lawsuits argued that Trump exceeded his authority and subjected trade policy to his whims.

The three judges were Timothy Reif, who was appointed by Trump; Jane Restani, named to the bench by former president Ronald Reagan; and Gary Katzman, an appointee of former president Barack Obama.

"The worldwide and retaliatory tariff orders exceed any authority granted to the President by IEEPA to regulate importation by means of tariffs," the court wrote, referring to the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

The ruling amounted to a categorical rejection of the legal underpinnings of some of Trump's signature and most controversial actions of his four-month-old second term.

The administration swiftly filed notice of appeal -- and the Supreme Court will almost certainly be called upon to lend a final answer.

While tariffs must typically be approved by Congress, Trump has said he has the power to act to address the trade deficits he calls a national emergency.

The plaintiffs argued that emergency powers law does not authorise the use of tariffs, and even if it did, the trade deficit is not an emergency because the US has run a trade deficit with the rest of the world for 49 consecutive years.

Trump has used the tariffs as a negotiating cudgel in hopes of forcing other nations to negotiate agreements that favoured the US, suggesting he would simply set the rates himself if the terms were unsatisfactory. *—PTI*

Musk steps down; 'Dark MAGA' ends

WASHINGTON, 29 MAY

Elon Musk abruptly left his government role as a top advisor to US President Donald Trump after spearheading efforts to reduce and overhaul the federal bureaucracy.

His departure from the Department of Government Efficiency, (DOGE), announced on Wednesday evening, marks the end of a turbulent chapter that included thousands of layoffs, the evisceration of government agencies and reams of litigation.

"As my scheduled time as a Special Government Employee comes to an end, I would like to thank President Donald Trump for the opportunity to reduce wasteful spending," Musk wrote on X. "The DOGE mission will only strengthen over time as it becomes a way of life throughout the government."

Musk's post was always intended to be temporary, but the White House was consistently vague on when he would step down.

His decision came shortly after he said he was "disappointed" by Trump's "big beautiful bill", terming it a "massive spending bill".

Musk had put at least USD 250 million behind Trump's candidacy and rallied behind the MAGA campaign with his own spinoff, Dark MAGA.

As Musk stepped down, Tesla shares shot up by 8.6 per cent. *—PTI*

Markets welcome court ruling; shares, US dollar, oil gain

Financial markets welcomed a US court ruling that blocks President Donald Trump from imposing sweeping tariffs on imports under an emergency-powers law. US futures jumped early Thursday and oil prices rose more than USD 1. The US dollar rose against the yen and euro. The future for the S&P 500 was up 1.7 per cent while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 1.4 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225 index jumped 1.9 per cent to 38,442.10. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1 per cent to 23,482.81, while the Shanghai Composite index gained 0.8 per cent to 3,365.40. US benchmark crude oil gained USD 1.06 to USD 62.90 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added USD 1.01 to USD 65.33 per barrel. The euro, however, slipped to USD 1.1242 from USD 1.1292.

Trump wrongly blocked parole: Judge

A federal judge on Wednesday ruled that the Trump administration wrongly ended humanitarian parole for hundreds of thousands of people allowed to live in the US temporarily. US District Judge Indira Talwani in Boston said two orders by Department of Homeland Security officials to suspend renewals were unlikely to survive a legal challenge. "The pause has now been in place for three months, in effect, an indefinite suspension," she wrote.

Chinese students decry 'Exclusion Act'

Chinese students studying in the US are scrambling to figure out their futures after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced Wednesday that some students would have their visas revoked. This is a "new version of Chinese Exclusion Act," said Linqin, a Chinese student at Johns Hopkins University. Roughly a quarter of foreign students in the US are from China, the second-largest country of origin behind India.

Smoke rises as the Israeli forces demolish the home of Jaafar Mona, a Palestinian militant who died in a blast in Tel Aviv in last August, in the West Bank City of Nablus on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel plans 22 settlements in West Bank

JERUSALEM, 29 MAY

Israel said Thursday it would establish 22 Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, including the legalisation of outposts already built without government authorisation. Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip meanwhile killed 12 people overnight, health officials said.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with Gaza and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war. Palestinians on the other hand demand that all three territories are returned for their future state. Most of the international community views settlements as illegal and an obstacle to resolving the conflict.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said the settlement decision "strengthens our hold on Judea and Samaria," using the biblical term for the West Bank, "anchors our historical right in the Land of Israel and constitutes a crushing response to Palestinian terrorism." He added it was also "a strategic move that prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel."

Israel has already built well over 100 settlements across the territory that are home to some 500,000 settlers. The settlements range from small hilltop outposts to fully developed communities with apartment blocks, shopping malls, factories and public parks.

The West Bank is home to 3 million Palestinians.

Israel had accelerated settlement construction long before Hamas' 7 October attack ignited the war in Gaza, confining Palestinians to smaller and smaller areas of the West Bank and making the prospect of establishing a viable, independent state even more remote. *—PTI*

4 DIE STORMING UN FOOD STORE

DEIR AL-BALAH, 29 MAY

In a desperate bid for food, hundreds of Palestinians stormed a United Nations food warehouse in Deir Al-Balah, Gaza, on Wednesday. The situation escalated into chaos, resulting in four fatalities, according to hospital officials.

This incident follows a day after another crowd was shot at while attempting to access a newly established aid distribution site backed by an Israeli-US foundation. That incident left one Palestinian dead and 48 others injured, with the majority suffering gunshot wounds, including women and children, reported Gaza's Health Ministry. The Israeli military said they fired only warning shots. *—PTI*

War crushing Ukrainian families

KYIV, 29 MAY

Three coffins lay on Wednesday inside the Soviet-era Palace of Culture at Korostyshiv in northern Ukrainian, surrounded by dozens of bouquets as a church choir sang farewell prayers. Hundreds of residents stood in grim silence.

The funeral was for 8-year-old Tamara, 12-year-old Stanislav, and 17-year-old Roman Martyniuk – siblings from the same family.

They were killed over the weekend when debris from a Russian cruise missile slammed into their home in Korostyshiv during an aerial barrage. "I saw destruction, great destruction. All the houses were razed and shattered," said Volodymyr Demchenko, the family's neighbour, recalling the night when the missile landed at 3 am.

The children's deaths underscore the mounting toll on Ukrainian families as Moscow ramps up its strikes amid faltering peace efforts. *—PTI*

Three children killed in Russian airstrikes on Sunday being laid to rest in Korostyshiv, Ukraine, ob Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

NATIONAL EMERGENCY

The Canadian province of Manitoba has declared a state of emergency over a series of wildfires, with Prime Minister Mark Carney agreeing to send in the military to help. Earlier this month, two residents of the small community of Lac du Bonnet died after being trapped in a major wildfire northeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba. *PHOTO: PTI*

'LACK OF EVIDENCE'

Docs blast RFK Jr for saying Covid vaccines not needed

INDIANA, 29 MAY

On 27 May, US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr announced that the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention will no longer include the Covid-19 vaccine on the list of immunisations it recommends for healthy children and pregnant women. The announcement was met with stern criticism from health officials.

The announcement, made in a video posted on social media platform X, comes on the heels of the Food and Drug Administration announcing on 20 May that it will approve new versions of the vaccine only for adults 65 years of age and older and for people with one or more risk factors for severe Covid-19 outcomes.

The agency will require vaccine manufacturers to conduct clinical trials to demonstrate that the vaccine benefits low-risk groups.

In the video, Kennedy spoke alongside National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya and FDA Commissioner Marty Makary.

The trio cited a lack of evidence to support vaccinating healthy children. They did not explain the reason for the change to the vaccine schedule for pregnant people, who have previously been considered at high-risk for severe Covid-19, doctors said.

Similarly, in the FDA announcement made a week prior, Makary and the agency's head of vaccines, Vinay Prasad, said that public health trends now support limiting vaccines to people at high risk of serious illness instead of a universal Covid-19 vaccination strategy.

Many public health experts and professional health care associations have raised concerns about Kennedy's latest announcement, saying it contradicts studies showing that COVID-19 vaccination benefits pregnant people and children.

The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, considered the premier professional organisation for that medical specialty, reinforced the importance of Covid-19 vaccination during pregnancy, especially to protect infants after birth.

Likewise, the American Academy of Pediatrics pointed to the data on hospitalisations of children with Covid-19 during the 2024-to-2025 respiratory virus season as evidence for the importance of vaccination. *—PTI*

US cancels $766M bird flu drug deal

The Trump administration cancelled USD 766 million awarded to drugmaker Moderna Inc to develop a vaccine against potential pandemic influenza viruses, including the H5N1 bird flu.

The pharmaceutical company said it was notified Wednesday that the Health and Human Services Department had withdrawn funds awarded in July 2024 and in January to pay for development and purchase of its investigational vaccine. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 10P to settle at 85.48 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 29 MAY

The rupee declined 10 paise to close at 85.48 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday due to a strong American currency against major crosses overseas and rising global crude oil prices. However, positive domestic equity market and foreign fund inflows supported the local currency and restricted its slide, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.56 and touched the intra-day low of 85.62 against the greenback. The unit hit the day's high of 85.40 before ending the session at 85.48 (provisional) against the dollar, 10 paise lower from its previous close. The rupee ended Wednesday's session two paise higher at 85.38 against the dollar. *—PTI*

Gold price declines ₹500, ends at ₹98,500 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Gold prices declined by Rs 500 to Rs 98,500 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday amid weak global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 500 to Rs 98,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). "Gold prices continued to correct as easing tariff risks, and a more cautious Federal Reserve dampened safe-haven demand," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said. He said the US Federal Reserve's May meeting revealed that policymakers are adopting a wait-and-see approach on the timing of rate cuts, as they assess the impact of recent policy moves, including the reciprocal tariffs now blocked by a US Court. *—PTI*

Google launches direct sales of Pixel devices in India

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Google has launched direct sales of its Pixel devices through the official online Google Store in India, enabling consumers to purchase smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds, and accessories directly for the first time. This move complements Google's existing online and offline retail presence in the country, as stated by the company. Mitul Shah, Managing Director of Devices and Services at Google India, highlighted that the launch is driven by the dynamic and evolving landscape of the Indian smartphone market. "This direct online purchasing option enhances our robust retail network, aiming to provide consumers with more choices," he said. While Shah confirmed India's strategic importance for Pixel, he did not disclose any plans for opening physical Google stores in the country. *—PTI*

AstraZeneca gets nod for lung cancer tablets in India

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

AstraZeneca India Pharma has announced that it has received official approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for the import, sale, and distribution of Osimertinib tablets, available in 40mg and 80mg strengths. This medication serves as a significant treatment option for patients suffering from non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) that is locally advanced and unresectable (Stage III). The approval is a landmark development, granting Osimertinib a new indication as a monotherapy for patients with EGFR-mutated NSCLC following chemoradiation. Sanjeev Panchal, Country President and Managing Director of AstraZeneca Pharma India, stated that this milestone represents a transformative advance in lung cancer treatment in the country. With lung cancer being the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in India, this development is poised to enhance therapeutic options for affected patients *—PTI*

RBI balance sheet swells 8.2% to ₹76.25L cr

Central government bags a bumper dividend of ₹2.69L cr

MUMBAI, 29 MAY

The size of the Reserve Bank's balance sheet as on 31 March, 2025 increased by 8.20 per cent year-on-year, leading to a bumper dividend of Rs 2.69 lakh crore for the central government.

Increase on assets side was due to rise in gold and domestic/ foreign investments by 52.09 per cent, 14.32 per cent and 1.70 per cent, respectively, said the RBI's Annual Report for the Year 2024-25 released on Thursday. Income for the year increased by 22.77 per cent and expenditure rose by 7.76 per cent.

"The year ended with an overall surplus of Rs 2,68,590.07 crore as against Rs 2,10,873.99 crore in the previous year, resulting in an increase of 27.37 per cent," it said.

According to the report, the size of the balance sheet increased by Rs 5,77,718.72 crore, or 8.20 per cent, from Rs 70,47,703.21 crore as on 31 March, 2024 to Rs 76,25,421.93 crore as on 31 March, 2025.

On liabilities side, the RBI said expansion was due to increase in notes issued, revaluation accounts, and other liabilities by 6.03 per cent, 17.32 per cent and 23.31 per cent, respectively.

Domestic assets constituted 25.73 per cent while foreign currency assets, gold (including gold deposit and gold held in India) and loans and advances to financial institutions outside India constituted 74.27 per cent of total assets.

The RBI also affirmed its commitment to continue with its supervisory measures aimed at early identification of risks and vulnerabilities. The central bank would also focus on enhancing cyber resilience and capabilities of Supervised Entities.

Meanwhile, the expenditure incurred on security printing during the financial year increased by nearly 25 per cent to Rs 6,372.8 crore as against Rs 5,101.4 crore in the previous year mainly due to increase in indent for printing of banknotes, according to the report. *—PTI/ANI*

Indian economy to remain strong

The RBI said the economy looks strong, driven by a revival in consumption demand, healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates and easing financial conditions. RBI said, "The outlook for the Indian economy remains promising in 2025-26, supported by revival in consumption demand, government's continued thrust on capex while adhering to the path of fiscal consolidation… India's participation in 14 free trade agreements and six preferential trade agreements, along with the new trade deals in progress may support growth in trade," the RBI said. *—Agencies*

Corporate bond yields eased in 2024–25

Corporate bond yields softened in 2024-25, tracking the decline in government securities (G-sec) yields, the RBI said. The average monthly yield on AAA-rated 3-year bonds declined across all major borrower categories in March 2025 compared to a year ago."

The monthly average yield on AAA-rated 3-year bonds of public sector undertakings (PSUs), financial institutions (FIs) and banks; non-banking financial companies (NBFCs); and corporates fell". Yields fell by 15 basis points (bps) for public sector undertakings (PSUs), financial institutions (FIs), and banks; by 28 bps for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs); and by 33 bps for corporates. *—PTI*

INDIA TO DRIVE GLOBAL GROWTH IN 2025–26: WEF

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

A World Economic Forum (WEF) report indicates that India will emerge as the primary engine of global economic growth in 2025 and 2026. Drawing from a survey of leading economists, the report highlights India's robust economic fundamentals and optimistic outlook despite prevailing global uncertainties.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts India's GDP to grow by 6.2 per cent in 2025 and 6.3 per cent in 2026, reinforcing its status as the fastest-growing major economy in South Asia. The region remains a focal point of economic momentum, evident in the recent positive trends in the purchasing managers' index (PMI), particularly regarding new export orders.

Additionally, a recent trade agreement between India and the United Kingdom is expected to enhance India's trade prospects, boosting confidence among economists. Despite challenges the region is seen as promising the WEF report said. *—ANI*

SENSEX, NIFTY REBOUND

Markets revive as US court blocks reciprocal tariffs

MUMBAI, 29 MAY

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Thursday after two days of decline, mirroring a rally in global markets as a US court blocked President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 320.70 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 81,633.02 in a volatile session amid monthly expiry in derivative contracts. During the day, it jumped 504.57 points or 0.62 per cent to 81,816.89.

The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 81.15 points or 0.33 per cent to 24,833.60. The index swung sharply in both directions on the monthly expiry day before ending with gains. Metal, realty, pharma and IT sector indices were major gainers.

PHOTO: PTI

Among Sensex firms, IndusInd Bank climbed 2.41 per cent a day after markets regulator Sebi barred its former CEO, Sumant Kathpalia, and four other senior officials from accessing the securities markets in connection with an alleged insider trading in the bank's shares. Sun Pharma, Adani Ports, Eternal, Tata Steel and Tech Mahindra were also among the gainers. Bajaj Finance, ITC, Bajaj Finserv and Asian Paints were among the laggards. *—PTI*

UK flags Indian market for Scottish salmon after FTA

LONDON, 29 MAY

The UK government flagged the unlocking of the Indian market for Scottish salmon following the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, finalised earlier this month and expected to be formally signed off in the coming weeks.

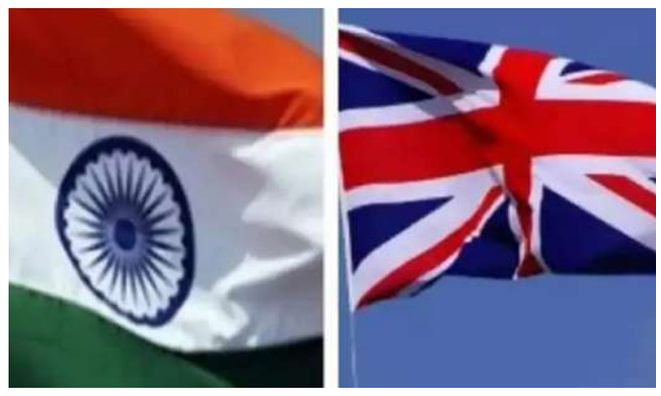
Downing Street has this week been highlighting benefits of the India-UK FTA and other trade pacts struck in its wake with the US and European Union (EU) in an effort to showcase the sectors and regions across the United Kingdom set to benefit. "These trade deals deliver long term security for people in Scotland," Prime Minister Keir Starmer said.

"These changes will be felt everywhere, whether it's lower food prices at the checkout, more choice for consumers and higher living standards that will improve livelihoods across Scotland."

Downing Street noted that the FTA had "unlocked a new salmon market through our deal with India, with tariffs dropping from 33 per cent to 0 per cent".

However, in Scotland, the spotlight remains on the whisky industry which is set to see tariffs for exports to India slashed significantly over the next decade following the 6 May deal which is expected to add an extra GBP 25.5 billion annually in the long run to the current two-way trade of GBP 41 billion.

Under the pact, Scottish distillers will immediately see tariffs halved from 150 per cent to 75 per cent and eventually to just 40 per cent over the next decade. *—PTI*



Downing Street has this week been highlighting benefits of the India-UK FTA and other trade pacts struck in its wake with the US and European Union in an effort to showcase the sectors and regions across the United Kingdom set to benefit

RAINS RAISE HOPES OF TIMELY KHARIF SOWING, SAYS ICRA

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The timely commencement of kharif sowing in India appears promising, bolstered by an upgraded rainfall forecast from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), according to a recent report by ICRA. The IMD has revised its rainfall projection to 106 per cent ± 4 per cent of the long-period average (LPA), an improvement from the earlier estimate of 105 per cent ± 5 per cent of LPA.

This positive forecast is expected to enhance sowing conditions for kharif crops, although the report emphasises that an even distribution of rainfall is crucial for optimising crop yields. While increased rainfall will help replenish reservoirs, excessive, concentrated rainfall could be detrimental to existing crops.

ICRA anticipates agricultural gross value added (agri-GVA) growth of 3.5-4.0 per cent for FY2026, with a forecasted 4.6 per cent expansion for FY2025. *—ANI*

SEBI bans 5 IndusInd officials

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued an interim order prohibiting five senior executives from IndusInd Bank from participating in the securities market, following allegations of insider trading that enabled them to avoid losses totalling nearly Rs 19.78 crore.

The order, dated 28 May, identifies Arun Khurana (Executive Director and Deputy CEO), Sumant Kathpalia (Managing Director & CEO), Sushant Sourav (Head of Treasury Operations), Rohan Jathanna (Head of GMG Operations), and Anil Marco Rao (Chief Administrative Officer, Consumer Banking). Some of these officials have reportedly resigned.

SEBI's investigation was initiated after a significant decline in IndusInd Bank's stock price, linked to a disclosure made on 10 March 2025 regarding discrepancies in its derivative portfolio accounting. The regulator found that the executives had sold substantial quantities of shares during a period deemed to contain unpublished price-sensitive information, while refraining from purchases, indicating an attempt to offload before the negative news became public.

SEBI has frozen the officials' bank accounts corresponding to the amounts avoided and mandated the funds be placed in fixed deposits, pending further investigation and potential penalties *—PTI*

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Khaitan withdraws brand name 'Trikal' from mkt

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Homegrown alco-beverage firm Radico Khaitan has withdrawn the brand name 'Trikal' for its new single malt whisky following criticism.

In a regulatory filing, it said the decision to withdraw the name was "not just a business decision, but a gesture of respect and a commitment to honour the sentiments of our people and country."

Concerns had been raised about the brand name, especially after reports that permission was denied in Uttarakhand. The product's label imagery was also criticised for resembling religious iconography, sparking backlash on social media.

Radico Khaitan explained that 'Trikal' is a Sanskrit word meaning 'three times' — referring to the past, present, and future — and symbolises India's rich heritage and culture. *—PTI*

OYO assigns five banks to pitch IPO to SoftBank

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

Global travel-tech unicorn OYO has arranged for five investment banks to meet its key shareholder SoftBank in June for a crucial presentation that could determine the company's path to a public listing, sources said.

The banks include Citi, Goldman Sachs and Jefferies from the global banking consortium, alongside ICICI Securities and Axis Capital representing Indian financial institutions.

SoftBank, one of OYO's largest shareholders, is keen to understand the key positioning strategies, expected valuation metrics, and investor appetite for the offering.

The high-stakes meeting is set to take place at SoftBank's London office. *—PTI*

DoT seeks TRAI's views on pricing, modalities

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The telecom department approached regulator TRAI seeking recommendations on reserve price, block size, quantum and other modalities for auction of mobile spectrum in eight existing bands, including 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz and 2,300 MHz, according to sources.

Other bands where TRAI's views have been sought by the Department of Telecom (DoT) include 2,500 MHz, 3,300 MHz and 2,6GHz bands, the sources told PTI.

DoT has also urged the telecom regulator to offer fresh recommendations for auction of spectrum in 600 MHz bands.

TRAI has also been asked to look at the possibility of auction for newly identified 6,425-6,725 MHz and 7,025-7,125 MHz bands for recommendations on auction timing, band plan, reserve price, and terms and conditions *—PTI*

TRUMP TARIFFS BLOCKED

India should be careful around US FTAs: GTRI

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

After a federal court of the United States struck down a reciprocal tariff announced by US President Donald Trump, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that India should proceed cautiously in its ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the US.

Analysing the impact of the ruling on Trade negotiations, Ajay Srivastava, founder of GTRI, said that India should resist any agreement shaped by threats or based on unlawful measures.

Srivastava said that Trump-era tariffs violate World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules as well as the domestic laws of the US as confirmed by the federal court.

"With the Trump tariffs standing on shaky legal ground, India must pause and reassess its negotiation strategy before committing to an FTA that could disproportionately favour US interests," said Srivastava in a statement.

ANI on 23 May reported through government sources that India and the United States are poised to sign the first tranche of the much-anticipated Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) before July.

The India-US trade deal would mark a significant milestone in economic relations between the two big economies, potentially opening new avenues for bilateral commerce and investment.

In 2024-25, for the fourth consecutive year, the US was India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade valued at USD 131.84 billion. India had a trade surplus of USD 41.18 billion in goods with the US in 2024-25.

After the landmark ruling of the US federal court, the stock markets globally reacted positively. *—ANI*

Analysts say India should resist any agreement shaped by threats or based on unlawful measures **PHOTO: ANI**

RCB storm into IPL 2025 final

Bengaluru bowlers justified skipper Rajat Patidar's decision to field first

Punjab Kings' Marcus Stoinis being bowled by Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Suyash Sharma, Virat Kohli, and others, celebrating *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW CHANDIGARH, 29 MAY

Bowlers shone as Royal Challengers Bengaluru outplayed Punjab Kings by 8 wickets in Qualifier 1 of IPL 2025 in Mullanpur. With the victory, RCB sealed their place in the final for the fourth time in history.

The side bundled out PBKS for 101 runs after opting to bowl first. RCB bowlers justified skipper Rajat Patidar's decision to field first by packing off PBKS for a paltry total in just 14.1 overs. Marcus Stoinis was the top scorer with 26. Young leg-spinner Suyash Sharma (3/17) did the star turn for RCB by picking up three wickets, while pacers Josh Hazlewood (3/21), Yash Dayal (2/26), and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/17) also helped the team's cause. In the paltry chase, Phil Salt scored 56 off 27 balls to clinch an easy win for RCB

Suyash Sharma and Josh Hazlewood claimed three wickets apiece as Royal Challengers Bengaluru bundled out Punjab Kings for 101 runs during Qualifier 1 of IPL 2025 in Mullanpur.

Yash Dayal scalped two wickets while Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Romario Shepherd also picked up one wicket each. Earlier, RCB captain Rajat Patidar won the toss and opted to bowl first.

While Patidar is back in the role of RCB captain, Hazlewood too has recovered to find a place in the Starting XI. Punjab Kings ultra-aggressive approach backfired on the day as Royal Challengers Bengaluru skittled the home team for 101 in Qualifier 1 of the Indian Premier League here on Thursday.

On a surface where hitting through the line proved to be tricky, the all-out attack strategy of the Punjab Kings contributed to their downfall after they were put in to bat. Their innings lasted just 14.1 overs. The RCB pace trio of Josh Hazlewood (3/21), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/17), and Yash Dayal (2/26) exploited the conditions well before leg-spinner Suyash Sharma (3/17) made it worse for the opposition.It is to be noted that the Punjab Kings are featuring in their first play-off fixture since 2014. *—PTI*

Gill's fumbling Titans up against mighty MI

MULLANPUR, 29 MAY

Among the title favourites but battling a loss of momentum, Shubman Gill's Gujarat Titans will be up against the mighty Mumbai Indians, who also have issues to be addressed, in the winner-takes-all IPL Eliminator here on Friday.

It is a knock-out game, but both sides are used to the stage, with Mumbai Indians being the five-time champions.

Titans have made the play-offs thrice in the last four seasons, including the trophy-winning run on their debut in 2022.

However, both Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya have a point to prove. Gill, the newly appointed India Test captain, would immensely build up his leadership credentials if the Titans went all the way.

Hardik has got the love of the fans back after being booed on his return to the team last year, and an IPL trophy will cement his place in the list of the fabled greats of the franchise.

But in their pursuit of glory, both leaders must find a way to address the issues at hand. *—PTI*

GT VS MI

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	7
GT Won:	5
MI Won:	2

GT vs MI Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

JYOTHI YARRAJI WINS WOMEN'S 100M HURDLES GOLD

GUMI, 29 MAY

It rained gold for India at the Asian Athletics Championships on Thursday as the country's fastest woman hurdler Jyothi Yarraji, seasoned steeplechase runner Avinash Sable, and the 4x400m women's relay team delivered stupendous performances to finish on top here.

After Jyothi and Sable set the tone, the quartet of Jisna Mathew, Rupal Chaudhary, Kunja Rajitha, and Subha Venkatesan clinched the gold medal in the women's 4x400m relay event after clocking their season-best time (3:34.18 sec) to extend India's dominance on the third competition day of the continental championship.

This was the 10th gold overall for India in the event and first since 2013. Overall, India snared three gold, two silver and a bronze medal on Thursday taking their overall tally to 14 after proceedings were disrupted by a massive thunderstorm.

In the women's event, Vietnam took silver with 3:34.77 sec, while Sri Lanka settled for the bronze with 3:36.67 sec. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Tiger's son Charlie Woods captures first junior crown

MADRID, 29 MAY

Charlie Woods, the 16-year-old son of 15-time major winner Tiger Woods, won his first American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) title on Wednesday, taking a three-stroke victory in Florida. The younger Woods fired a six-under par 66 final round to capture the Team TaylorMade Invitational at Streamsong Resort Black course, finishing on 15-under 201. It was the first victory in five AJGA starts for Charlie Woods, who fired eight birdies and two bogeys in the final round but closed with four consecutive pars to seal the triumph in the top US junior series.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X

MotoGP's Luca seriously injured in Japan testing crash

SHANGHAI, 29 MAY

Italian MotoGP rider Luca Marini has suffered serious injuries, including a collapsed lung, after a heavy fall while testing for an endurance race in Japan. Marini was hospitalised after crashing at the Suzuka circuit on Wednesday, his Honda HRC team said. He was stabilised and will remain under observation in Japan until fit to travel. The 27-year-old rider posted a picture on his Instagram feed of himself lying in a hospital bed. "Thanks, everyone, for the support! I'll keep you posted," he wrote in Italian. Marini, who finished 15th in the British MotoGP at Silverstone on Sunday, was testing for the Suzuka 8-Hour.*—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Hasan Ali's brilliant T20I comeback against B'desh

LAHORE, 29 MAY

Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali has revealed that his mother was mugged at his hometown of Gujranwala before the first T20 International against Bangladesh here, and he channelised his anger over the incident for a match-winning five-wicket haul in the game. Hasan, making a comeback to the Pakistan team after nearly a year, took 5 for 30, his best T20 international figures, to set up a 39-run win for Pakistan at the Gaddafi stadium in Lahore on Wednesday night.*—PTI*

Alex de Minaur suffers his earliest grand slam exit

PARIS, 29 MAY

Alex de Minaur has suffered his earliest grand slam exit in two years, giving up a two-set lead to lose to chaotic Kazakh Alexander Bublik in the second round at Roland-Garros on Thursday.

Bublik roared to life early in the third set after dropping the first two in an hour of ineptitude to eventually stun ninth-seeded de Minaur 2-6, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 in front of a captivated court 14 crowd that got far more than it bargained for. It is just the third time in de Minaur's career that he has lost from two sets up – and the first since his heartbreaking fourth-round defeat to Cristian Garin at Wimbledon in 2022.

Alexander Zverev scripts comeback to reach third round

Third seed Alexander Zverev reached the 2025 French Open second round after beating Jesper De Jong. The German claimed a 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 victory in the men's singles second round. De Jong showed his class in the opening set but succumbed to Zverev's brilliance eventually.

Alexander Bublik

Notably, Zverev was the 2024 French Open runner-up as he lost to Carlos Alcaraz in the final.

Jessica Pegula storms into third round

Jessica Pegula led the American charge at Roland Garros on Thursday with a hard-fought 6-3, 7-6(3) win over compatriot Ann Li, marking her 30th match victory of the season. It was a determined performance from the world No. 3, who held her nerve in a tense second set to reach the third round of the French Open for the third time in her career.

Jannik Sinner beats retiring Richard Gasquet

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner had only good words for Richard Gasquet, as he eased into the third round at Roland Garros on May 29 with a 6-3, 6-0, 6-4 win in the final match of the Frenchman's career. Reigning US and Australian Open champion Sinner is on a 16-match winning run at Grand Slams and is attempting to become the first Italian man to win the French Open since 1976. *—PTI*

Messi scores twice, assists in Miami's 4-2 win over Montreal

FORT LAUDERDALE, 29 MAY

Lionel Messi scored twice and had an assist, and Inter Miami broke out of its slump with a 4-2 victory over Montreal.

Messi scored in the 27th and 87th minutes and set up Luis Suárez's goal with some nice dribbling in the 68th. Suárez added another in the 71st on Wednesday night.

The win gave Messi's Inter Miami team just its second victory in its past eight matches. Miami last won on May 3, going 0-2-2 since then and dropping to sixth in the Eastern Conference.

Messi's first goal on Wednesday was set up by Sergio Busquets, who delivered a pass to his former Barcelona teammate and set the screen that freed up Messi for his seventh goal of the MLS season. *—PTI*

SINGAPORE OPEN

Satwik-Chirag in quarters; Prannoy, Sindhu bow out

SINGAPORE, 29 MAY

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty *PHOTO: PTI*

The Indian men's doubles team of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty entered the quarterfinals, while former world champion PV Sindhu suffered an early exit in the Singapore Open badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Satwiksairaj and Chirag rallied to beat seventh-seeded Indonesian duo of Sabar Karyaman Gutama and Moh Reza Pahlevi Isfahani 19-21 21-16 21-19 in a gruelling contest that lasted one hour and 14 minutes.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu went down to world No. 5 Chen Yufei of China 9-21, 21-18, 16-21 in 65 minutes in a hard-fought second-round match.

Sindhu, who recently slipped to world No. 17, showed glimpses of her old form, especially in the second game where she led 19-12 before closing it out 21-18.

Despite a dominant 21-14, 21-9 win over Canada's Wen Yu Zhang in the opening round, the 2022 Singapore Open champion failed to build momentum.

There was disappointment for India in the men's singles competition as H S Prannoy bowed out following a 16-21 14-21 loss to Frenchman Christo Popov in the pre-quarterfinals. *—PTI*

AFC U23 ACQ: India to play Qatar, Bahrain

NEW DELHI, 29 MAY

The India U-23 men's national team was on Thursday drawn in Group H of the AFC U23 Asian Cup Qualifiers and will play against hosts Qatar, Bahrain, and Brunei Darussalam.

The draw was conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Qatar, the highest-seeded team among the four, will host Group H, with the matches slated to be played between September 1 to 9.

A total of 44 teams were divided into 11 groups of four each. The group winners and the four best runners-up, alongside hosts Saudi Arabia, will complete the cast of 16 teams for the seventh edition of the AFC U23 Asian Cup, which will take place in January 2026.

The seedings for the draw were based on a points system derived from the teams' final rankings across the previous three editions of the tournament. India was placed in Pot 3.

India had earlier appointed Naushad Moosa as the head coach of their U-23 national team.

Moosa takes charge from June 1, when the Blue Colts assemble in Kolkata for a training camp, before flying off to Tajikistan to play two exposure matches against Tajikistan (June 18) and the Kyrgyz Republic (June 21).

The India U-23s will utilise all the FIFA international windows to set camp and play exposure friendlies to prepare for the AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said. *—PTI*

Ranveer's back-to-back 69, India jumps to T-2

HONG KONG, 29 MAY

Delhi teenager Ranveer Mitroo registered a second consecutive card of two-under 69 to help India jump to tied second place in the boys' team competition along with compatriot Krish Chawla in the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC) Junior Championship here. With an overall total of one-under 283 after the second round, the Indian duo is six strokes behind the leaders Parin Sarasmut and Warut Boonrod of Thailand. The Indian Golf Union had sent a four-member team to compete in the tournament organised by APGC.*—PTI*

ON 19TH BIRTHDAY

Norway Chess: Gukesh beats Nakamura

STAVANGER, 29 MAY

World champion D Gukesh brought his campaign back on track on his 19th birthday, defeating world No.2 Hikaru Nakamura of the USA in the third round to open his account even as Arjun Erigaisi suffered his first defeat in the Norway Chess Tournament here on Thursday.

Gukesh, who suffered back-to-back defeats to world No.1 Norwegian Magnus Carlsen and compatriot Arjun Erigaisi in the first two rounds, put Nakamura, one of the best Rapid and Blitz players, under time pressure to win the game in 42 moves and collect three points.

World Chess Champion D Gukesh in Stavanger, Norway *PHOTO: PTI*

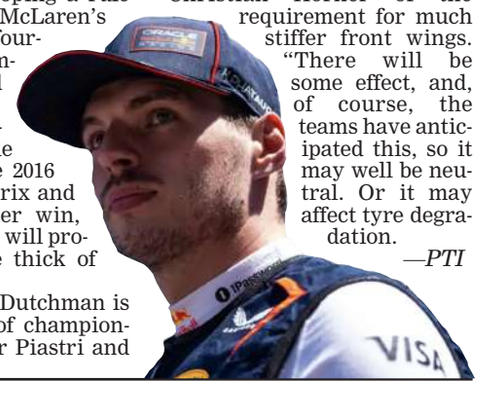
Playing with white pieces, Gukesh, who was constantly under time pressure in the last two games, was the one who got Nakamura staring at the clock in round three of the six-player double round-robin tournament.

"I feel quite good (about the win). I think my time management was much better today than before. He (Nakamura) had some drawing chances, but I guess, overall, it was good," said Gukesh as he moved to fifth spot on the points table ahead of Chinese No.1 Wei Yi. Nakamura realised soon after the start of the game that something had gone wrong early on in a Giuoco Piano opening.

He decided to reverse the situation by switching to a kingside attack that could exploit Gukesh's vulnerability after a difficult start. However, the Indian wasn't vulnerable. *—PTI*

Max hoping rule change can propel his title charge

PARIS, 29 MAY

Max Verstappen returns to the scene of his maiden Formula One victory, chasing his fourth consecutive Spanish success this weekend with his Red Bull team hoping a rule change will end McLaren's supremacy. The four-time world champion triumphed on his Red Bull debut as a teenager at the Circuit de Catalunya in the 2016 Spanish Grand Prix and will hope another win, his fifth in Spain, will propel him into the thick of the title race.

The 27-year-old Dutchman is 25 points adrift of championship leader Oscar Piastri and 22 behind his McLaren teammate Lando Norris, who their rivals believe could be hampered by the introduction of strict front wing flexibility tests. "It's a significant change," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner of the requirement for much stiffer front wings. "There will be some effect, and, of course, the teams have anticipated this, so it may well be neutral. Or it may affect tyre degradation. *—PTI*